

Avalanche kills boy in Uintas

Evanston youth was snowmobiling with family when he was caught in slide

By **PATRICK PARKINSON**

Of the Record staff

A 15-year-old Wyoming boy died Monday when a giant avalanche buried him in the Uinta Mountains east of Kamas, the authorities said.

The slide, which was nearly 600 feet wide, buried Evanston resident Hayden Ellingford in about seven feet of snow after carrying the boy about 1,000 feet into a grove of trees, Summit County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Nick Wilkinson said.

"He was snowmobiling with his father and his two brothers and they didn't have avalanche beacons or probes," Wilkinson said in a telephone interview Tuesday.

The group was riding snowmobiles about eight miles west of Bear River Service when a slide was triggered in the Windy Ridge/Moffit Basin area of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest at about 4 p.m., Wilkinson said, adding that the avalanche occurred about 47 miles east of Kamas.

"We wish people would have the proper equipment because when you're back there, you have to save yourself," he said, adding that avalanche danger in the Uinta Mountains Monday was high.

The boy's family called for help but despite search-and-rescue officials arriving within about an hour of the report at 4:21 p.m., the boy was buried for about 90 minutes before his body was retrieved in the remote area of the forest at about 5:54 p.m., Wilkinson said.

The avalanche near Humpty Peak had a cornice near its frac-

• Continued from A-1

Avalanche danger in the Uintas can be extreme

ture line that was four to six feet deep, he said, adding that the dangerous slope has a steepness of nearly 40 degrees.

"It was a considerable amount of snow," Wilkinson said.

Avalanche forecasters have strongly encouraged backcountry travelers to avoid slopes in the Uintas steeper than 30 degrees.

Crews responded from Summit County and Uinta County, Wyo., and found the boy.

Paramedics performed CPR but were unsuccessful in reviving the boy, he said.

"The victim was pronounced dead by on-scene medical personnel," Wilkinson said.

No one else was injured in the slide, he said, adding that the cause of the avalanche hasn't been determined.

The Office of the Utah Medical Examiner must still determine the boy's cause of death.

"We had search dogs en route and two or three snow cats, a number of snowmobiles and a medical helicopter," Wilkinson said.

Officers responded from Kamas, Bear River Service and Chalk Creek Road, he said.

"It was kind of a three-pronged approach," Wilkinson said.

Weak snow layers are partially to blame for high slide danger in the Uintas this week, according to the Utah Avalanche Center.

Another avalanche that slid about 1,000 feet reported Monday from the Thousand Peaks area did not injure anybody, Wilkinson said.

"My advice would be to stay out of the backcountry when the avalanche danger is high," he added.

The Utah Avalanche Center forecasts slide advisories daily for the Wasatch and Uinta Mountains at (888) 999-4019 or www.utahavalanchecenter.org.